

STSE Activity: The Debate on Fast Food

Big Idea:

Environmental factors, including natural factors and those resulting from human activity, can have a wide range of effects on human health

Learning Goals:

- To understand the effect certain foods like fast food has on the different organ systems and the overall health of an individual
- To think critically the social or economic impact of the decisions we make as individuals as it relates to the choice of diet
- To form an informed opinion based on research and to articulate one's argument clearly and effectively

Overall Expectations Covered:

E1. Analyse the social or economic impact of a technology used to treat systems in the human body, and the impact of lifestyle choices on human health

E3. Demonstrate an understanding of the structure, function, and interactions of the circulatory, digestive, and respiratory systems of mammals.

Specific Expectations Covered:

E1.2 analyse the impact of various lifestyle choices on human health and body systems

E3.3 describe the anatomy and physiology of the digestive system (including the mouth, epiglottis, esophagus, stomach, intestines, liver, and pancreas), the mechanisms of peristalsis, absorption, and mechanical and chemical digestion, and the function of the kidneys

Teacher's Instruction

1. Watch the YouTube video called "Health Warning – Junk Food" to get the class to start thinking about the issue of fast food and its effect on health. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLTgTH3Kems&feature=related>
2. Divide the class into 4 groups and assign each group a role to play (Consumers, Doctors, Government officials, Fast Food Corporation Executives)
3. Give each group about 30 minutes to come up with a group position on the question "Should the government impose a health tax on fast foods?" and arguments to back up their position. Provide a chart paper and markers for the groups to record their arguments.
4. Give each group 3 minutes to share their position and to present their arguments.
5. After each group has presented their case, give the groups 1 minute for rebuttals and questions.

Teacher's Note:

- Depending on the size of the class and the individual groups, it may be helpful to assign a job for each person in the group (ie. Recorder, presenter, note taker during the debate, etc) to make sure that everyone in the group is participating
- It may be a good idea to go over some of the materials on the digestive system and the circulatory system before the activity to help the students to come up with scientific arguments
- Remind the students that they are arguing from their own point of view, but from the view of their assigned perspective